

Concepts of drishTi-srishTi-vAda

It has been my observation that one needs to be very clear as to what exactly is the framework under which a particular Shruti is stated or a particular bhAshya-vAkya is intended. Failure to understand the model within which the issue is discussed leads to needless confusion.

There are two models acceptable in advaita vedAnta namely srishTi-drishTi-vAda and drishTi-srishTi-vAda. In this write-up, we shall understand the basic concepts of drishTi-srishTi-vAda.

First and foremost, it needs to be understood as to what exactly is meant by drishTi and what is the meaning of srishTi? Further, what does drishTi-srishTi refer to?

DrishTi refers to vritti-vishisTa-chaitanya. So, pot-drishTi refers to pot-vritti-vishishTa-chaitanya.

SrishTi refers to the action of production of objects/world (srija).

drishTi-srishTi refers to drishTi itself being srishTi owing to absence of pramANa in establishing the difference of drishTi from srishTi.

DrishTi-srishTi is defined as either of the following: -

(i) दोष-प्रयुक्त ज्ञातैकसत्त्व

Existence only while being known and which is caused by a defect.

(ii) दोष-प्रयुक्त अज्ञातसत्त्व-अभाव

Absence of existence without being known and which is caused by a defect.

(iii) प्रतिपन्न-उपाधि-दृष्टि-जन्य ज्ञातैकसत्त्व

Existence while being known and which is caused by pratipanna-upAdhi-drishTi. pratipanna-upAdhi refers to the general part of the locus in which the superimposed object is seen to be located. Thus, pratipanna-upAdhi-drishTi refers to the locus-sAmanya-amsha-vritti-upahit-chaitanya.

(iv) दृष्टन्तर-अवेद्यत्वे-सति ज्ञातैकसत्त्व

Existence only while being known while not being known by any other seer.

Now, these definitions of drishTi-srishTi are devoid of defects as under:

(a) It covers the entire spectrum of objects in the world. The world is caused by avidyA, which is a defect. And the world exists only while it is being known. Just like a dream which is caused by a defect of sleep and exists only while being known.

(b) The definition does not have ativyApti in tuchchha such as hares' horns which have अज्ञातसत्त्व-अभाव but not due to any defect.

In DSV, there is no seer other than oneself. Here, the seen appears to exist only when it is being known. Thus, everything is momentary except six entities, which are assumed to be

beyond the scope of DS, namely avidyA, jIva, Ishwara, Chaitanya, Jiva-Ishwara-bheda and avidyA-chit-sambandha. These six entities are assumed as beginningless. DS is only in respect of sriIya and does not operate in anAdi-entities. The mithyAtva of the world is established also through DS while the mithyAtva of entities, wherein DS does not operate, is proved through drishyatva.

jIva is defined as avidyA-pratibimbIta-chaitanya. Ishwara is defined as avidyA-upahIta-bimba-Chaitanya. Brahman is avidyA-upalakshIta-Chaitanya.

Objection: In DS, the world is mere appearance and is not born from a well-defined cause. For example, in DS pot is not produced from clay and cloth is not produced from thread. Rather both pot and cloth are accepted to be produced from avidyA. Therefore, the Shruti which prescribes jyotiShToma for svarga or Shravana etc for jnAna becomes meaningless. Just by the knowledge of svarga, there shall be srishTi of swarga and the jyotiShToma will be meaningless.

Answer: Just as the cause-effect-relationship as well as the sentences propounding that in the dream is mithyA, similarly in waking. For e.g. the potter in dream teaches to his son that pot is made from clay. He uses clay to make a pot. He cannot use cloth to make a pot. And yet that cause-effect-relationship and the statements propounding that are mithyA. Similarly, for mithyA svarga, there can be prescription of mithyA jyotiShToma.

Objection: Then the statements of Shruti are just like the statements of dreams.

Answer: No. Because there is no sublation of the object which is the main import of Shruti which is Brahman. The dream is completely sublated whereas Brahman is never sublated. Hence, there is a difference.

Objection: In DS, no one should strive to eat food. Because by mere thinking 'I have eaten', one should feel satisfied.

Answer: Just as there is DS in dreams and yet one strives to eat when felt hungry, similarly in waking there is no contradiction. Just as all transactions in dreams are carried out, similarly the transactions of waking are carried out in DS.

Objection: How would you reconcile pratikarma-vyavastha (PKV) in DS? PKV requires contact of objects and senses and assumes ajnAta-sattA of objects. However, in DS all objects are of jnAtaIka-sattva and have no existence while they are not being known.

Answer: PKV is valid for srishTi-drishTi-vada and is not accepted in DSV. PKV is propounded for manda-adhikArI.

Objects: How would even adhyAsa be possible in DS? AdhyAsa has taTastha lakshaNa and swarUpa lakshaNa. The taTastha lakshaNa mentions adhyAsa to be caused by (i) contact of senses with locus (ii) samskArA and (iii) defects. This is clearly not possible in DS because there is no existence of locus prior to illusory knowledge. Similarly, the swarUpa lakshaNa of adhyAsa i.e. appearance of non-difference of mithyA vastu with satya vastu, is not possible.

Answer: The taTastha lakshaNa of adhyAsa is prescribed for manda-adhikArI and is valid in srishTi-drishTi-vAda. Also, the taTastha lakshaNa is only for produced objects and not for anAdi entities. Further, the swarUpa lakshaNa of adhyAsa is valid even in DSV.

Objection: How exactly swarUpa lakshaNa i.e. appearance of non-difference of mithyA vastu with satya vastu operates in DSV in case of adhyAsa such as silver in a shell?

Answer: In the silver-shell-adhyAsa, the mithyA silver is superimposed in Chaitanya-delimited-by-idam-amsha-of-shell. Here, the idam-amsha-of-shell is mithyA. However, the Chaitanya which is delimited by idam-amsha-of-shell is satya and exists prior to adhyAsa. Hence, swarUpa lakshaNa of adhyAsa is satisfied.

Objection: How do you say that adhyAsa is an effect of avidyA? It cannot be so in DSV. When you know “this is silver”, you do not know “this is shell” and hence there cannot be a shell present there in DSV. This is so because the shell can be present only when you have knowledge in the form of “this is shell”. Now, once the shell itself is not there, how can there be ignorance of the shell. So, here is the situation where there is adhyAsa in the form of “this is silver” and yet there is no ignorance of the shell. So, your statement that adhyAsa is caused by avidyA is wrong.

Answer: There is no rule that one cannot have ignorance of x if x is not existent. If I have knowledge of x at time t1, then I cannot have ignorance of x at the same time t1. That is accepted. However, the absence of x does not imply non-ignorance of x.

Objection: There are two knowledges, “this is silver” and “this is not silver”. In DSV, both these knowledge have prAtibhAsika-satta. So, how can one knowledge be sublated by another? Also, these are two jnAna and hence their objects namely silver-1 and silver-2 have to be different in DS. So how can there be a sublator-sublated relationship when the objects themselves are different?

Answer: Just as this happens in a dream. The rule is that the knowledge which sublates another knowledge should not be of lower order. Since both are prAtibhAsika, there is no violation of the rule. Also, there is similarity between silver-1 and silver-2 insofar as there is silverhood in both of them. Hence, there is no incongruence in sublator-sublated relationship

Objection: In DS, the srija exists only when there is knowledge thereof. In sushupti, there is no knowledge of jIva-Brahman-bheda. So, it should not exist then. Thus, there will be a cycle of freedom-bondage in sushupti-jAgrat.

Answer: jIva-Brahman-bheda is anAdi and is beyond the scope of drishTi-srishTi. Hence, the objection is not tenable.

Objection: There is no knowledge of samskAra in sushupti. Hence, in DS, there is no existence of samskAra then. So, how would a deep sleeper get awake in the absence of samskAra.

Answer: avidyA is beyond the scope of DS. That avidyA is present in sushupti. That avidyA is the cause of samskAra and hence samskAra is present in the form of kAraNa during sushupti. Hence, there is no contradiction.

Objection: How do you explain pratyabhijñA in DS? When one says, “this is that Devadatta”, then bhAga-tyAga-lakshaNA is employed by rejecting time t1 and t2 because they cannot be non-different. Since Devadatta is same in both t1 and t2, there arises pratyabhijñA by rejecting t1 and t2. However, in DS, Devadatta at t1 and t2 is also different. Hence, there cannot be pratyabhijñA.

Answer: You are right. There cannot be pratyabhijñA. What we generally accept as pratyabhijñA is illusion only,

Objection: So how does Shruti employ bhAga-tyAga-lakshaNA in Tat-tvam-asi?

Answer: That is within the framework of srishTi-drishTi-vAda by doing the anuvAda of common understanding. In DSV, bhAga-tyAga-lakshaNA is not employed for explaining MahAvAkyAs. Rather, it is bAdha-sAmAnadhikaraNya which is employed.

Objection: But when ten people see a pot, all of them experience that they have seen the same pot.

Answer: That is an illusion. Since everyone has different drishTi, the pot is also different. It is like ten people seeing a rope and getting confused together that they have seen the same snake. Also, we can understand it through dream analogy.

Objection: How do ten people confuse together that there is the same snake seen by them?

Answer: Because of imagined similarity as in dream. This imagined similarity is also drishTi-srishTi and is produced. However, if the ten people don't meet and go in different directions, such similarity is not produced because there is no such drishTi. The reason for production and non-production of similarity is the different-and-strange-powered-ness of avidyA.

Objection: In sushupti, we see that prANAs operate despite there being no knowledge thereof. How to explain it in DSV?

Answer: Shruti explains the merger of everything during sushupti. And production during jAgrat/svapna through BU 2.1.20 अस्मादात्मनः सर्वे प्राणाः सर्वे लोकाः सर्वे देवाः सर्वाणि भूतानि व्युच्चरन्ति तस्योपनिषत्सत्यस्य सत्यमिति प्राणा वै सत्यं तेषामेष सत्यम्. The operation of prANa is seen by the other person.

Objection: But the Shruti does talk of existence of HitA nadI etc during sushupti.

Answer: The Shruti does not intend to propound existence of HitA nAdI etc during sushupti. It rather intends to explain the sequence of arrival to sushupti by jIva.

Objection: BU 2.1.20 refers to production of the world from Brahman and not from jIva. BhAshyakAra also holds the creation of the world from Brahman in 1.4.18 परस्माच्च ब्रह्मणः प्राणादिकं जगज्जायत इति वेदान्तमर्यादा.

Answer: That is explained by BhAshyakAra accepting srishTi-drishTi-vAda.

In DSV, the world is prAtibhAsika only. There is no differentiation of vyAvahArika and prAtibhAsika. The world is just like a dream. There is no difference whatsoever.